

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4937

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INTERPELLATIONS

REF: SEOUL 4709

SUMMARY: DURING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INTERPELLATIONS OPPOSITION HAS CRITICIZED GOVERNMENT FOR UNNECESSARY RESTRICTION OF FREEDOM AND CREATION OF "CRISIS" ATMOSPHERE; NDP URGED END EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION. PRIME MINISTER DEFENDED YUSHIN CONSTITUTION AND SAID EMERGENCY MEASURES WOULD REMAIN IN EFFECT FOR SOME TIME. PRIME MINISTER REPORTED THAT ROKG BELIEVES NORTH KOREA ABLE TO MOUNT ATTACK BY THEMSELVES FOR PERIOD OF TIME BUT THAT ROKG HAS CAPABILITY TO WITHSTAND SUCH ATTACK. PRIMIN STATED ROK HAS NO INTENTION DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS BUT DECLARED THAT WITHIN FIVE YEARS ROK WILL HAVE "SELF-SUFFICIENT NATIONAL DEFENSE." PRESS HAS REPORTED OPPOSITION CRITICISM TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT, SUGGESTING DELIBERATE DECISION TO RELAX PRESS CONTROLS FOR ASSEMBLY COVERAGE END SUMMARY.

1. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY JULY 1 AND 2 CONDUCTED INTERPELLATIONS ON
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NATIONAL SECURITY AND DIPLOMACY. GOVT AND OPPOSITION ASSEMBLY-

MEN QUESTIONED CABINET WITH MAJORITY ANSWERS SUPPLIED BY PRIMIN KIM CHONG-PIL. INTERPELLATIONS ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES SCHEDULED JULY 3. COMMITTEES WILL DELIBERATE BILLS JULY 4-7 BEFORE FINAL VOTE JULY 8. NDP CONTINUES TO MAKE CLEAR BOTH ON ASSEMBLY FLOOR AND TO PRESS THAT IT STRONGLY OPPOSED TO CIVIL DEFENSE CORPS AND PUBLIC SECURITY BILLS.

2. OPPOSITION PRESENTED STANDARD LINE THAT NATIONAL SECURITY DOES NOT REQUIRE ELIMINATING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. NDP FLOOR LEADER KIM HYONG-IL QUESTIONED PRIMIN ON RATIONALE FOR RESTRICTIONS OF FREEDOM. HE CRITICIZED GOVERNMENT FOR EQUATING MOVEMENT TO RESTORE DEMOCRACY WITH DESTRUCTION NATIONAL CONSENSUS. KIM NOTED FALL OF INDOCHINA DUE TO DICTATORSHIP AND CORRUPTION. HE CALLED CIVIL DEFENSE CORPS LAW VIOLATION BASIC RIGHTS AND DEMANDED IT BE WITHDRAWN. SPECIFICALLY HE ASKED:

--WHEN EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE WOULD BE LIFTED
-- HOW MANY STUDENTS AND OTHERS ARRESTED UNDER MEASURE
-- FOR CLARIFICATION GULF OIL POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS SCANDAL
-- WHEN CONSTITUTION MAY BE DEBATED AND PRESIDENT DIRECTLY ELECTED.

3. NDP ASSEMBLYMEN HAN YONG-SU CONTINUED ALONG SAME LINES. HAN REITERATED NDP CALL FOR CONSTITUTION DELIBERATION COMMITTEE TO AMEND YUSHIN CONSTITUTION. HE DEMANDED RESTORATION FREEDOM OF PRESS, AND CRITICIZED PRESENT GOVT ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN FOR PUNISHING ONLY LOW LEVEL OFFICIALS. HAN CHARGED THAT GOVT HAD MISUSED ALL EMERGENCY MEASURES TO INSURE SECURITY OF REGIME. HE SAID ROK NOT NOW FACING CRISIS BUT MAY FACE SUCH "CRISIS" WHEN GOVT LOSES SUPPORT OF AND CONTROL OVER PEOPLE. HE ASKED THAT EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE BE LIFTED IMMEDIATELY.

4. PRIMIN REPLIED TO CRITICISM OF DOMESTIC POLICY BE EXPLAINING GOVT ACTIONS REQUIRED BECAUSE INCREASED DANGER FROM NORTH. HE STATED THAT GOVT HAS NEVER SUPPRESSED PEOPLE, WHO ARE "AS FREE AS THEY NEED BE" IN DAILY LIFE. HE EMPHASIZED EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE NECESSARY TO PREVENT "INFILTRATION IMPURE ELEMENTS." HE SAID MEASURE WOULD NOT BE LIFTED FOR "CONSIDERABLE TIME", AND, REJECTING NDP DEMAND FOR CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE, SAID YUSHIN CONSTITUTION WILL REMAIN UNTIL KIM IL-SONG "GIVES UP." CONFIDENTIAL

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PRIMIN SAID HE WILL INFORM NDP "PRIVATELY" OF NUMBER ARRESTED UNDER EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE.

5. ON CORRUPTION PRIMIN SAID GOVT DOING ITS BEST TO ELIMINATE IRREGULARITIES; HE SAID GOVT CANNOT UNCOVER TRUTH OF GULF OIL SCANDAL SINCE KIM SONG-KON IS DEAD. HE ALSO REJECTED IDEA OF SPECIAL LAW TO ELIMINATE CORRUPTION.

6. DURING QUESTIONING ON NATIONAL SECURITY KIM HYONG-IL ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION OF REMARK BY PRESIDENT REPORTED IN TIME MAGAZINE THAT NORTH IS NOT ABLE TO LAUNCH ALL-OUT ATTACK WITHOUT PRC OR SOVIET SUPPORT. PRIMIN REPLIED THAT IN ROKG JUDGMENT NORTH HAS INDEPENDENT CAPABILITY TO CARRY OUT WAR FOR CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME AND THAT ROK MUST ASSUME PRC AND SOVIETS WILL SUPPORT NORTH'S POLICY OF UNIFICATION BY FORCE.

7. GOVT ASSEMBLYMEN RAISED QUESTIONS CONCERNING PLANNED DEFENSE SEOUL AND US COMMITMENT. PRIMIN SAID POPULATION MUST PREPARE TO DEFEND AGAINST INTENSIVE THREE DAY ATTACK BY NORTH BEFORE SOUTH WILL BE ABLE TO LAUNCH EFFECTIVE COUNTERATTACK, WHEN QUESTIONED IF ROK WOULD USE ATTACK BY NORTH TO MOVE ACROSS DMZ, PRIMIN REPLIED ROK DOES NOT INTEND TO UNIFY COUNTRY BY FORCE, BUT THAT NORTH KOREAN ATTACK COULD LEAD TO ITS OWN DESTRUCTION. IN ADDITION TO CONVENTIONAL ATTACK HE EMPHASIZED DANGER OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY AS JUSTIFICATION FOR CIVIL DEFENSE CORPS.

8. PRIMIN MENTIONED REAFFIRMATION OF US COMMITMENT BY PRESIDENT FORD AND OTHER US LEADERS BUT NOTED SOME MEMBERS OF CONGRESS SKEPTICAL OF COMMITMENT. SINCE US TROOPS CANNOT REMAIN FOREVER, HOWEVER, HE REPORTED THAT ROK HOPES TO ACHIEVE "SELF-RELIANT" DEFENSE CAPABILITY WITHIN FIVE YEARS WHICH WOULD ELIMINATE NEED FOR DIRECT US ASSISTANCE. TO THIS END NEW DEFENSE TAX WILL IN PART BE USED TO DEVELOP INDUSTRY TO PRODUCE HIGH EFFICIENCY, HIGH PRECISION WEAPONS. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NUCLEAR INTENTIONS PRIMIN SAID ROK NOT YET CAPABLE AND HAS NO INTENTION DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

9. ON INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS PRIMIN EXPLAINED CURRENT INITIATIVE TOWARD DISSOLVING UN COMMAND AS PRAGMATIC RESPONSE TO CHANGING SCENE IN WHICH UN HAS LOST ABILITY TO MAINTAIN WORLD ORDER. HE DESCRIBED PRESENT INITIATIVE AS CONTINUATION OF CONFIDENTIAL

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LAST YEAR'S UN POLICY. HE STATED THAT "LOGICALLY NORTH SHOULD RESPOND FAVORABLY TO PROPOSAL." IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON KOREANS LEFT IN VIETNAM HE SAID EIGHT EMBASSY STAFF AND 151 OTHER KOREANS STILL IN VIETNAM BUT SOME POSSIBILITY EXISTS FOR THEIR RETURN.

10. COMMOTION DEVELOPED ON ASSEMBLY FLOOR JULY 2 WHEN OPPOSITION PROTESTED DELETION RECORD OF REMARKS VIOLATING EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE. GOVT CLAIMED OPPOSITION REMARKS NOT DELETED FROM ORIGINAL ASSEMBLY RECORD. PRESS CARRIED ABOVE INCIDENT AS WELL AS REPORTING GENERAL THRUST OF OPPOSITION CRITICISM. REMARKS DIRECTLY VIOLATING EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE WERE NOT REPORTED, BUT GOVT ANSWERS ENABLE READER TO SURMIZE NATURE OF QUESTIONS. THERE WERE NO REPORTS OF GULF OIL SCANDAL, SPECIFIC CALLS TO CHANGE CONSTITUTION OR END EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE OR OF KOREANS LEFT

IN VIETNAM.

1. COMMENT: ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS INDICATE THAT, WHILE OPPOSITION NOT WILLING TO CHALLENGE ROKG OUTSIDE OF ASSEMBLY, IT IS FULLY PREPARED TO DO SO WITHIN LEGISLATURE, WHERE EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE DOES NOT APPLY. EXTENT OF PRESS COVERAGE OF OPPOSITION-GOVT EXCHANGES ALSO NOTEWORTHY, AND CLEARLY RESULTS FROM DELIBERATE ROKG MOVE TO RELAX CONTROLS ON PRESS, AT LEAST FOR ASSEMBLY COVERAGE. IN THIS REGARD, BLUE HOUSE SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT IN VIEW OF GENERAL CALM NOW PREVAILING ON INTERNAL SCENE, ROKG NOW INTENT ON SEEKING OPPOSITION COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PROCESS.
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